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ABSTRACT

Management competencies within the higher education system are vitally important to the effectiveness of the institution. An examination of 50 institutional codes and bylaws reveals rather general statements with respect to specific duties of management professionals. Only five of 24 institutions surveyed had developed detailed position guides internally. The dean of a college of education must provide leadership pertaining to administration of organizational detail and leadership that is concerned with the more abstract phases of human engineering. Departments are the basic units of the administrative structure, and have the power to initiate most actions affecting the operations of the institution. Department chairmen are middle-management personnel and should be appointed with some form of faculty consultation. Often they are chosen in one or more of the following ways: direct appointment by the president, vice president, or dean upon consultation with the faculty; faculty nomination; or election. The relationship between the dean and his department chairmen depends upon personal and operational factors. Both positions are basically responsible for the same things at different levels of decision-making. Certain basic competencies are necessary for successful higher education administrators: (1) understanding the nature and setting for administration in higher education; (2) decision-making and communication; (3) understanding the practice of administration. (MM)

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COMPETENCIES: MIDDLE MANAGEMENT ROLES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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There are those involved in higher education administrative roles who tend to believe that competencies in the management areas are not really of great importance to the success of their position. Some believe that once a person has achieved the ultimate of "academia" he can make any necessary adjustments, learn minimal key management principles while on the job and consquently perform effectively in his role.

One only needs to observe the administration of higher education for a period of time to note that there are relatively few individuals who have demonstrated success within those parameters. Management competencies (whether naturally endowed, or learned, or both) within the higher education system are vitally important to the effectiveness of the institution. Even the development of a cognizance of the complexities related to management and human endeavor might be of some real value.

Particularly lacking in higher education is literature pertaining to the identification and description of those competencies important to the successful operation of middle-management personnel in colleges and Universities and specifically, the roles of deans and department or division chairmen. An attempt is made in the following paragraphs to identify some of these competencies and define roles so vital to the operation of these major units within and institution.

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It is an understatement to say that a university is a complex organization with numerous subsystems and subsets. Within this pattern even faculties tend to structure themselves bureaucratically in order to carry on their business. Consequently, the role of the deans and department chairmen when competing for the power, control and authority

necessary to see that their functions are carried out becomes quite complex and includes many nuances far beyond that provided in academic training in a subject matter field.

It has been said that the ideal middle management administrator needs to have a "nervous constitution", one which would permit him (or her) to live habitually within the force of conflict and tension. He (she) also needs the ability to reduce the various intangible factors encountered daily to manageable levels of decision making and operation. Since the essential activities of a college generally take place in the minds of people and their implementation of ideas, reducing these to a workable power-authority-control network becomes a not so simple task. The challenge is obvious.

The Deanship

The variety of higher education organizational patterns in the United States almost precludes the establishment of a single, workable definition with respect to the deanship. John Corson[1] identifies a number of middle management offices bearing the title of dean.

> They fall into six general categories: (1) those with responsibilities for the whole institution, titled dean of faculty, dean of the university, dean of academic affairs, or even provost; (2) deans of students or dean of men and dean of women; (3) deans of arts and science colleges, including those of units within a university and of separate liberal arts colleges (sometimes under the title "dean of faculty"); (4)deans of professional schools and colleges; (5) deans of graduate studies; and (6) deans of evening and extension divisions.

For our purposes, the classification of dean will be limited to those middle management roles subordinate to the campus-wide academic officers (vice president or provost) and usually assigned the charge of a school, college or division having sub-units headed by chairpersons or some similar position.

The three categories of deans within these parameters are (1) deans of academic colleges or schools such as arts and letters, the sciences or combinations of these; (2) deans of professional schools such as law, medicine, education, agriculture and engineering; and (3) in some instances, deans of graduate schools and deans of evening and extension programs.

Few institutions delineate actual roles for their academic deans. An examination of fifty institutional codes and by-laws reveals rather general statements with respect to specific duties and only five institutions out of twenty four surveyed reported having detailed position guides developed internally.

The following role-guide for the deanship of a professional school in education might well serve as a working model in developing guides for one of the three categories of deanship.[2]

College of Education - General

> ...Related problems which concern colleges of education include: (1) relationships with the public schools in the area upon whom it must depend to accept its product as well as assisting in the laboratory experience for teachers, (2) public relations for the college as reflected through contacts with various communities in the service area, (3) certifying completion of course requirements for increasingly complex credential requirements, (4) advisement of students interested in professional positions, (5) enforcement of standards and regulations, (6) interpretation of policies, (7) research in teacher education, (8) the development of appropriate graduate studies related to the preparation of professional educational personnel of all levels.

The Leadership Role - The Deanship

> The Dean of a college of education must provide leadership in all of the functions listed in the foregoing paragraphs. His specific role might well be subdivided into two major categories: (1) leadership functions pertaining to administration of organizational detail, and (2) leadership which is concerned with the more abstract phases of human engineering.
>
> The leadership functions under the first catefory (administration of organizational detail) would include the following: (1) organizational relationships within the college and between the college and other administration units in the university, (2) record keeping and provisions of services for faculty, (3) interpretation of credential regulations, (4) evaluation of staff, (5) acquiring new faculty, (6) budgetary matters

(7) new legislation, (8) public relations, and (9) administration of all related details required of this office. This does not infer that the Dean must perform all these functions; it does imply, however, that he has the responsibility of seeing that they are performed in an efficient and accurate manner.

The second sub-division concerns the more abstract factors related to any leadership function. These include (1) motivation, (2) encouragement of creative, teaching, writing and experimentation, (3) utilization of resources, (4) innovation, (5) faculty involvement, and (6) faculty morale. The permeating factor in the entire list of functions assumes that the faculty will be involved through representation or directly, in all situations which specifically affect them or their assignment.

The Department

Historically departmentalization was a consequence of categorizing research specializations. As professional schools developed, other sub-units organized on the basis of function and services performed emerged until now we have the current diverse organizational patterns. While departmental structures appear to have several common or core characteristics their operations may vary somewhat depending upon the philosophy of the college and university of which they are a part. It is still true, however, that departments generally remain as basic units of the administrative structure and have retained the power to initiate most actions affecting the operations of the institution.

The following summarization of department structure/department chairmen roles provide some common factors related to function reported in eight responses to our survey. Only twenty-four of 100 institutions as contacted responded in any way.

Organization and Autonomy of the Department

A department, the basic instructional administrative unit established by the University, shall be organized by its faculty for the purpose of carrying on instruction and research in a particular field or fields of knowledge. The faculty of a department shall include all persons of the rank of instructor or above whom, on the nomination of the chairman and Dean of the College, are appointed or assigned to it. When individuals who do not already

hold rank as full-time members of the teaching faculty are employed for administrative positions and are given academic rank, such rank shall be granted in a particular academic department only with the approval of the department in question.

The department as an entity may be assumed to have the fullest measure of autonomy consistent with the maintenance of college and University educational policy and correct academic and administrative relations with the other divisions of the University. Should a dispute arise between a department and another unit of the University concerning the proper limits of authority and responsibility, the department may appeal to the Dean for a ruling. If necessary, it may then appeal to the Vice President and, thence, to the President.

2. Duties of the Department Chairmen

2.1 Organize the department. Organization of each department shall be done jointly by the faculty and the chairman and may be altered by mutual agreement at any time (a request for change may be initiated by two-thirds of the faculty.) Final approval must be given by the college.

2.2 Communicate with the department for the administration.

2.3 Communicate with the administration for the department.

2.4 Assume responsibility for his staff:
- a. Initiate recommendations for new appointments.
- b. Initiate recommendations for reappointments.
- c. Initiate recommendations for salary changes.
- d. Initiate recommendations for terminations.
- e. Initiate recommendations for tenure.
- f. Initiate recommendations for leaves of absence.
- g. Initiate recommendations for promotions.
- h. Initiate recommendations for assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships.

2.5 Prepare budget requests and supervise the expenditure of funds allocated to the department.

2.6 Recommend the appointment of and supervise the work of non-academic department staff.

2.7 Supervise the use and assignment of allocated departmental space (excluding general classrooms), facilities, equipment, and supplies and maintain an inventory of the latter two.

2.8 Hold regular department meetings, as seems most appropriate within the organization of the department; also upon request of any member of the department faculty.

2.9 Arrange teaching schedules and other programs, including graduate offerings, if any, for the most effective use of faculty resources.

2.10 Initiate and/or consider proposals for changes in the curricula, including graduate programs, if any, and forward to the Dean of the College for disposition.

2.11 Be responsible for the execution of college and University policies and regulations.

2.12 Strive constantly to improve the quality of teaching and research.

2.13 Create the proper intellectual environment for the best development of scholarship.

2.14 Work with the Director of the Library to enrich the collection, giving due attention to planned research and future growth of the department.

2.15 Make recommendations through the Dean of the college or the Director of Summer and Off-Campus Programs as to proposals for course offerings in the summer school and personnel to be employed.

2.16 Represent the department before committees, councils, and other bodies when requested to do so.

2.17 Be responsible for revision copy for the catalog and other bulletins, including major and minor requirements, and consult other members of the department where desirable.

2.18 Coordinate and make recommendations concerning the advising of majors in the departments.

2.19 Cooperate with the department and the administration in planning physical facilities appropriate to the functions of the department.

2.20 Encourage research and publication. Meet with individual faculty members on opportunity for, and support of, individual research or study.

2.21 Orient new faculty members in departmental policies and procedures.

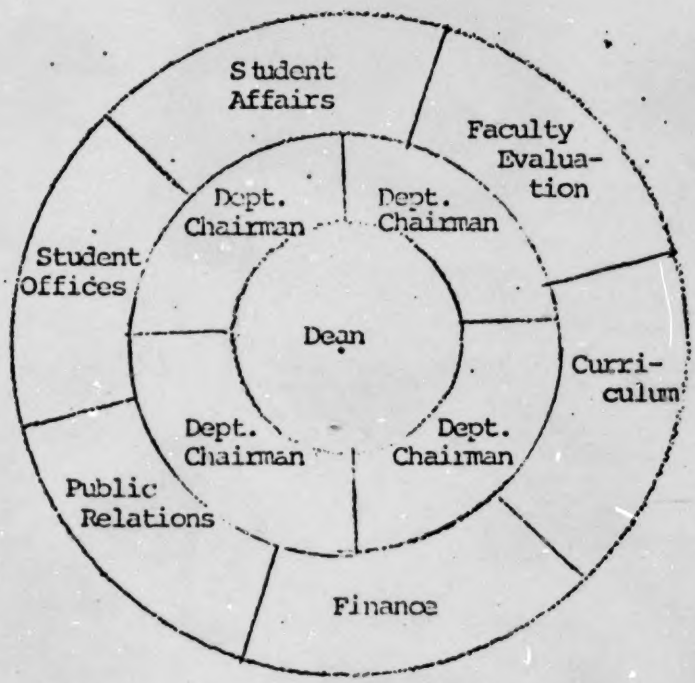
2.22 Be responsible for the discharge of unspecified duties pertinent to his office.

Department chairmen generally are chosen in one of three ways or combinations: (1) through direct appointment by the President, Vice President or Dean upon consultation with the faculty, (2) appointment contingent upon nomination of the faculty, and (3) election. Chairmen generally are middle-management personnel and as a rule should be appointed with some form of faculty consultation involved. The practice of rotating leaders every

two or three years usually is not effective since continuity is limited. It takes time to learn the procedures established in a bureaucracy and consequent effectiveness both politically and administratively may be considerably diminished when selection is based upon popularity or politics with little interest or preparation in the leadership role as a factor.

Dean - Chairmen Relationship

The relationship between the Dean and his Department Chairman obviously depends upon both personal and operational factors. If position guides are developed to provide the foundation necessary for decision-making, and if the personnel involved have some understanding of the administrative process and are individuals of common sense and compassion then a positive working relationship is possible. Both positions are basically responsible for the same things at different levels of decision making. The following diagram depicts this relationship with respect to certain selected responsibilities.



Faculty and student participation in all of these functions are essential elements.

Whatever organizational units are developed within a college, school or division, they should be constructed around related functions, each area having defined responsibility, authority and a clearly understood chain of command.

One of the really "sticky" situations in a large number of institutions is the relationship of the graduate dean with the academic deans, the academic programs, the departments, faculties and students. The greatest amount of discontent appears to be evident in those institutions where the dual control concept over faculties and students is involved in program administration. The more leaders to whom a person is directly responsible, the more danger there appears to be of a fragmented pluralism developing in the administrative process. Confusing frustration and unproductive conflict are often the by-products.

In those institutions where the graduate dean serves as a coordinator and provides services for students and faculty and the programs remain the responsibility of the academic or professional school deans, the entire operation functions at a much more effective and efficient levels.

Competencies

Certain basic competencies (skills and understandings) are both characteristics and necessary for the success of administration (middle management) in higher education.

Three of these and their sub-competencies are

A. Understanding the Nature and Setting for Administration in Higher Education

--The Context

--The Administrative Process

--Leadership: Definitions, Images, and Dynamics

--Process and Institutional Organization

B. Decision Making and Communication

--Understanding the Decision Making Process

--Communication: What it is, how it works

C. Understanding the Practice of Administration

--Roles of middle management personnel

--Selection of Personnel

--Program Development

--Budget Development

--Plant and facilities utilization

It is virtually impossible to develop all of these in depth in this article. However, each of these competencies will be generally defined and discussed to a limited extent in the following paragraphs.

COMPETENCY I

Understanding the Nature and Setting for Administration in Higher Education

In any institution the formal organizational structure serves as the primary source of power in decision making. How individuals interact within this structure depends a great deal upon the perceptions of leadership that students, faculty and administrators have of their position in this operational matrix.

Kingman Brewster Jr.[3] concluded that a majority of faculty were not sufficiently interested in devoting a majority of their time and attention to the running of a university to the point that the concept of "participatory democracy" will be truly democratic. Other data tend to support this concept. A majority of faculty are interested in teaching, research, publication and service as they should be. In a sense, because of their relatively narrow interests and their in-depth training in specific subject areas faculty tend to live in an atmosphere of

"isolated proximity." Becoming involved in administrative pluralism and political anuerism is usually not their "bag."

Faculty senates generally involve a relatively small number of staff and a smaller number of students in their decision making process. A much smaller and less representative proportion of this group participate and are identified as the more vocal, active personalities. At times this type of parallel administrative structure inhibits effective decision making since it is almost impossible to ideate all parameters relating directly to roles and the authority necessary for the decision to the finalized and an institutional commitment made.

This does not preclude considerable faculty involvement in decision making (transactional style) middle-levels of management in an institution but does require a knowledge of management skills and processes to enable any decisions to be made at all. Brewster (Harvard) interprets his feelings relative to the sharing of the broader decision making processes at the higher level in this manner.

> Not only the capacity to make decisions boldly and consistently but also the quality of those decisions urges that inherently executive matters not be distorted by being poured into a quasi-legislative group in the name of representation.

Universities are notorious for their ineffective, time wasting, time consuming committee structures. Although committees are a necessary component for in-put relative to the decision making process, few effectively contribute to the goals or purposes designated. At all levels of university administration, even the middle management areas, the concept of "isolated proximity" where each faculty member as a specialist in a certain field is expected to talk to rather than talk at another colleague with a diverse background often prohibits consensus on the issue at hand which may indeed be totally foreign to each member of the committee.

Keltner[5], in discussing principles relating to group decisions concluded that

> The more abstract the proposition under consideration, the greater the possibilities of joint agreement, and the more concrete the proposition under consideration, the less opportunity for full agreement.

He also indicated that agreement was not synonomous with commitment and when agreement is imposed upon a group via forced consensus there will, in all probability, be no real commitment on part of some members of the group although a representative decision will be recorded. These committee decisions are more "ceremonial" than sincere.

Organization

By definition an organization provides for the arrangement of personnel to facilitate the accomplishment of some common goal(s). This generally requires (1) a describable structure, (2) a structured expression for rational action (process) and (3) provisions for a system of cooperation. One sign of a healthy organization is its ability to effectively orient new members and slough off those who cannot perform or produce.

Whenever any organization attempts to develop a clear-cut division of its activities with a hierarchially arranged authority pattern a beauracracy is formed. Faculty to a great degree are controlled by their social, political and professional (technical) relationship to this beauracracy. Few university scientists, for example, own their own equipment. To complete their work they must be employed by an organization which owns the cyclotron, the test tube and the laboratory facility. The legal authority with respect to decision making becomes more complex when these circumstances are understood.

The chain of command within a line and staff pattern generally runs from the legislature, a governing board, the president, his appointed administrators, deans, department chairpersons and faculty. Staff positions are those special roles which extend or evolve from any of the line positions but do not have line authority except through the administrative position from which they evolved. Examples are librarians, legal officers, publications specialists, budget officers, maintenance, research officers, etc.

The institutional character of a university and its sub-systems is determined by the operational philosophy of the appointed status leaders. Whether the administrative unit is centralized/decentralized, or tall (layered)/ flat depends upon the leadership and its knowledge

of organization and operation. Obviously unusual pressures from above can seriously restrict the effectiveness of deans and department chairmen.

A "tall" organization is so structured that numerous hierarchical channels must be followed before any type of formal decision can be made and action taken. A "flat" organization is designed to allow the president or his immediate subordinates to have direct lines to the base of the organization while by-passing the middle-management areas. This type of structure often is highly centralized and provides the chief officer with almost total control over the institution--an impossible assignment. An overly decentralized organizational pattern allows almost total authority and autonomy at middle management levels. This too in practice hinders the process of interaction between all levels of the hierarchy. Obviously a combination of these structures is the most workable, its effectiveness based upon the goals, needs and talents available in each institution.

Numerous studies have been conducted in business, industry and education relating to qualities of good and bad leaders. Some characteristics common to good leadership observed in most of these studies were

1. People not "thing" oriented
2. Self-confidence: Believe they can do well and they their subordinates can do well
3. Capacity for empathy
4. Effectiveness often depends upon "fit" within a situation

Leadership Styles

Knezevich[6] identifies three basic leadership styles which leaders in practically any role develop. One, classified as nomothetic is the

by-the-book, code or institutional oriented leader. Decisions are based purely upon the rules and regulations developed thus relieving any major personal responsibility for unpleasant decisions that need to be made. Insecure, unknowledgable administrators often develop this style of operation. A second is labeled as ideographic. This is an ego centered style which places the self and personality in opposition to the institutional guides and policies. In this style of operation promises are made in response to varying and even differing pressures with little consideration for institutional guidelines. The real difficulty lies in finally being required to make a decision affecting these various committments.

The third style of leadership is defined as transactional or subordinate centered. This utilizes a goal-oriented subordinate involvement decision making process following institutional guidelines and policy but operating so that the individual personality is not destroyed. Exceptions may be made not necessarily on expediency but with serious thought given to the consequences of the decision. This is by far the most demanding yet effective style of leadership.

Martha A. Brown[7] of Stephen Austin State University conducted a study of what kind of leaders faculty wanted. She surveyed upper academic rank faculty in twenty eight public colleges and universities in four states. A summary of her study indicated that:

1. ...there is a strong relationship between the professor's satisfaction with the interaction of his superior and the leadership style of that superior.

2. ...data from this study tend to indicate that there is a stronger dislike of authoritarian than a liking for democratic styles.
3. ...while the professors clearly preferred a subordinate-centered leadership they do not necessarily favor the most extreme of the transactional style.
4. ...in this study the professors stated a preference for a leader who presents problem, gets suggestions, makes decisions or defines limits and asks colleagues to help him make decisions, as opposed to the more authoritarian decision-making arrangements.

Final or ultimate responsibility cannot be delegated. These generally have legal basis and can only be changed in the courts or through law. However task responsibility with commensurate authority to make decisions may be and should be delegated.

Whenever a position such as a chairmanship is delegated three major points should be clearly in the mind of both the appointer and the appointee.

1. A clear assignment of duties should be identified.
2. Authority commensurate with the assignment should be given. The delegate must be allowed to make commitments within the parameters of his assignment.
3. There is an obligation on the part of the subordinate to the executive for satisfactory performance.

COMPETENCY II

Decision Making and Communications

The Decision Making Process

The process of decision making is simple to outline. The implementation of the process is a complex one, however, and becomes quite complicated if all the consequences are considered. The steps involved are

1. Recognition of and identification of the problem.
2. Study the problem-utilize resources and consultants. (Avoid using too many consultants.)
3. List all alternatives and their consequences.
4. Establish priorities based on consequences.
5. Make decision.
6. Evaluation of consequences.

The integrity of leadership and the subsequent decision making process develops the confidence necessary for the positive operation of any institution. Autocratic or anarchic decision making patterns often reflect insecurity and lack of experience on the part of the dean of department chairperson. The consultative process must be open and free and delegation of the assignment related to the decision must be clear and provide the discretionary authority necessary.

The human sacrifice concept sometimes utilized by administrators is unrealistic more often than not. One shouldn't accept a position intending to be a martyr-he(she) might succeed and at times with little or no benefit to the department or school. Goodleaders are not expendable, they are vitally important to the effectiveness of any program of project.

COMPETENCY II

Collegial management should serve to create a sense of common purpose and achievement--an atmosphere for motivation -- an aura of mutual stimulation. Decisions then result in a greater number of commitments than agreements or simple acquiesence. Good governance places an extraordinary emphasis upon the consultation process and the effective use of compromise. Perhaps deans and chairpersons should act more as consultants, sounding boards and communication interfaces rather than a role playing, status seeking leaders.

As Alvin Toffler has pointed out both in his speeches and writings, decision making in this accelerated, revolutionary society must be made more quickly and the consequences of these actions last for a much shorter period of time. More "first time" things are happening than ever before in higher education and one competency that administrators must develop is the ability to accept diversity and adapt to the anti-massification movement so clearly developing in our society.

There simply will be more new decisions in a more decentralized institutional pattern. The middle management leader will need to develop a new system of communications and a new sense of openness toward the whole concept of change.

It is not always possible for the department chairman or dean to provide a highly intellectualized form of leadership. His main function at 8:00 a.m. might be to have a portion of the floor cleaned in a classroom or a lock fixed on a faculty member's door. That's the way it often is regardless of what one believes.

Communication

To permit good communications flow one should not establish hazy, poorly defined chains of command. A professional skepticism exists regarding any administrator in higher education and one should not strive to re-enforce such an attitude thorugh poor administrative procedures. Communications channels should be just that and not devised to delay, emasculate or divert information.

Open dissemination of information greatly affects relationships with faculty. However, indiscriminate distribution can lead to misunderstanding and ill-will. Communication is more than verbal. It involves the transmission of beliefs, ideals, personal traits even emotions and any abortion of these values add to the complexity of the leadership process.

COMPETENCY III

Understanding the Practice of Administration

John Corson[8] in defining management tasks writes

> A principal task of management is to receive information, to compare this information with some ideal and to issue orders which it believes will make the enterprise more effective.

Management roles require knowledge about name areas. These include budgets, facilities, programs, decisions, personnel, politics, rules and regulations, political processes, change processes and on and on.

The higher education manager needs to learn or develop some understanding of all of these factors. He needs to develop a sense of timing with respect to decisions and their effect on the area involved. Clearly the knowledge required of the

sub-competencies in this unit provide the "gut" data necessary for the institution to function well.

Summary

There is no doubt that academic leadership requires courage. Middle management leaders must work effectively with students, faculty, administrators, regents, the public, the community, the state, the nation and even world forces in some instances.

He must be a consultant, a listener, a communicator, a change agent, a fund raiser, an evaluator, a teacher, a decision maker and a scholar. Such competencies are not ones generally "picked up" in a year or so without in-depth study and training. One cannot exist long nor work effectively unless he has certain personal qualities of which humaneness is vital. The effective higher education leader must be an actualizing individual -- one who appreciates himself, respects others and recognizes the unique worth and potential of human beings.

NOTES

1. John J. Corson, Governance of Colleges and Universities, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960) 80-81.

2. College of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

3. Kingman Brewster, "Politics of Academia," Power and Authority, By Harold L. Hodgkinsen and L. Richard Meith, editors, (Jassey-Bass, Inc. Pub., 1971) 54-64

4. Kingman Brewster, op. cit. pp. 57-58

5. John W. Keltner, Interpersonal Speech-Communication, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., 1970) 153

6. Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education, Second Edition, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) 103-104

7. Martha A. Brown, "What Kind of Leaders Do Faculty Members Want?" College Management (January 1973) pp 25+

8. John J. Corson, op. cit., p. 133